

Ashley Wiltshire
Private Address due to Retaliation issues
Somewhere in CT

Testimony on Legalization and Regulation of Cannabis

First, as a person who does not believe in taking narcotics or pain killers unless absolutely necessary, and who prefers naturopathic remedies were possible, Cannabis has been one of the best medications for me. But because of the cost to have an MMP license is so expensive and must be renewed every year, it is cost prohibitive, thus I have had to give up my MMP. For me this has been a travesty. In addition, the quality of the product in our CT dispensaries is deplorable. I have often had to look elsewhere to obtain the quality product at a price I could afford. Cannabis has been a life saver for me with my glaucoma, stress, anxiety and even degenerative joint disease. I prefer it over RX medications that have too many side effects. I do not know where I would be without the ability to utilize small quantities of Cannabis for my disabilities.

Based on the above I strongly support all of the newly proposed legislation and it's proposed revisions. As too each individual bill, I respond with some person notes below.

SB 1085 Legalization and Possession and Criminal Records

It is important for us to realize that while Cannabis has long been thought to be a gateway drug, this has been proven to be false. Unlike Alcohol, which though legal, causes severe impairments and health issues, especially when abused, Cannabis has many benefits that outweigh the discrimination of its' use. Alcohol is far more toxic and dangerous and more of a dangerous drug that is legal than Cannabis. Like Alcohol, there is no reason it cannot be properly regulated. Furthermore, like in the days of prohibition when people were arrested and prohibition finally ended, all convicted persons were absolved and released as where their recs. Over-crowding of our jails and criminal courts for a medicinally approved product is insane. Versus, alcohol that has NO known medicinal use other than to numb pain temporarily back in the days of the wild west, and yet, it is legal. Does this make one better than the other legally, maybe, maybe not, but the benefits of Cannabis outweigh the benefits of Alcohol, while the negatives of Alcohol clearly are more expansive than those of cannabis.

This brings up the issue of pistol permits and MMP Licenses. People who smoke cannabis are far less likely to become violent and aggressive or even consider picking up a gun, than someone who drinks alcohol. Alcohol is often in the mix when there is an accidental shooting or a deliberate one. Alcohol reduces inhibitions and causes people to do crazy things. Versus Cannabis, which is more calming or creative stimulating. So, this issue of refusing people pistol permits if they have a MMP license makes absolutely no sense. It is also a violation of our constitutional rights to bear arms based on our medical needs. Statistically it can and has been proven that few people who use Cannabis has ever had an issue with a pistol. Under this premise, anyone who drinks, takes RX pain meds and so on, should not be allowed a pistol permit.

HB 7372 - Driving while under the influence

While we can all certainly understand the ramifications of someone who is too high or inebriated to drive, like with Alcohol, there is a minimum that would need to be consumed to consider someone to high or under the influence to be classified as not able to drive. Reality is that there are very few reports of car accidents by people who have smoked cannabis by itself versus the number of car accidents under the influence of alcohol. And the number of people who consume cannabis is probably the same or close to the same as those that use alcohol.

SB 1089 - Cannabis and the Workplace

Just like drunkenness would not be tolerated in the workplace, a single drink at lunch is not considered drunkenness. Much is the same with cannabis. But more so, if a person has a license to consume cannabis, no job under the Americans with Disability Act can impede with a person's choice of medical treatment. This would be discrimination and violation of HIPAA. Furthermore, anyone who tells you they do not get an affect from drinking high octane coffee or smoking cigarettes is not being honest. Caffeine is a known stimulant that affects people in different ways. And cigarettes can also create a kind of high as well. But more importantly, if we are going to demand the disclosure of people's medication and make determinations as to their use at a job, then what do we do with people who must take pain killers on a daily basis to go to work or take Amphetamines for ADD/ADHD)? Are we going to tell them that they cannot work for someone because of these Schedule II narcotics? We need to base this on their job performance.

HB 7371 - Regulation for Adult Use

Cannabis is one of the most valuable medications we have with the least amount of side effects and for that matter no real dangerous side effects. That said, if Alcohol which is clearly more dangerous than Cannabis is legal, then Cannabis should be recreationally legal with the same kind of constraints. Cannabis could actually curb the amount of excessive drinking accidents as people are less likely to get into an accident using Cannabis.

If it was made recreational, not only would I be able to obtain what I need without fear of repercussions but the state would make an awful lot of money on taxation of the legalization so long as the product quality is brought up to a better standard. A whole new market could actually bring our dying state back to life. With over 75% of Connecticut residents wanting to pack up and move do to the costs and lack of jobs or jobs that even pay enough to afford the cost of living here, we might be able to revitalize our state and have less people being forced to move out.